



P4: Olympic Resistance

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Game Overview

“**Olympic Resistance**” is a Greek mythology themed competitive, resource-management board game aimed to familiarize players with gods, tales, and heroes within the ancient Greece canon. As players, you each try to expand your territory by building villages, fortifications and temples while collecting resources. At each round, a mythological event occurs, each with its unique effects on players.

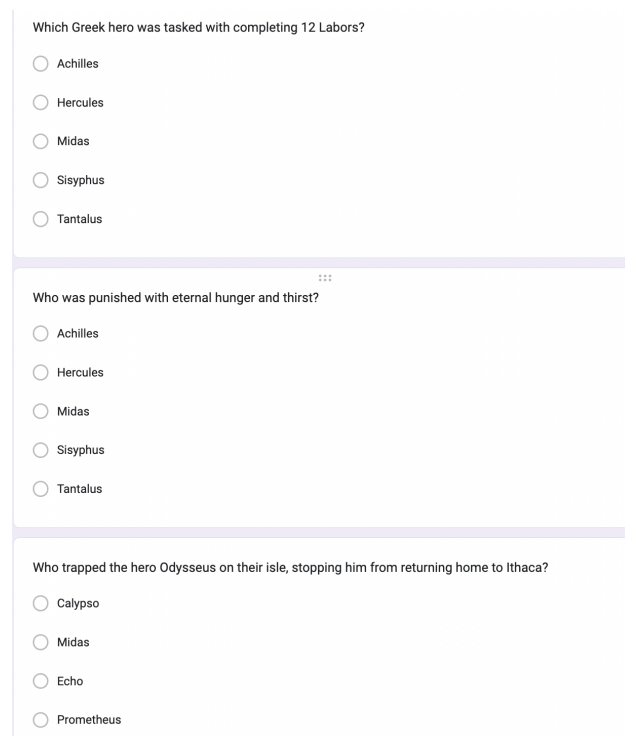
Players gain victory points as they build more structures. Each structure requires different resources to build, and are worth a different amount of victory points. The fortification, village, temple are worth 1, 2 and 3 victory points respectively. When you build a temple and give an additional sacrifice, you may dedicate the temple to a God, which will grant you their powers.

The first player to 10 victory points wins the game. If no players have reached 10 victory points when all event cards have been revealed, the player with the most points wins.

Goals & Inspirations

As stated in our P1 writeup ([Final Documentation](#)), our goals in creating Olympic Resistance were to 1) spark player interest in mythology; 2) help them memorize the names and domains of the 12 Olympians; 3) familiarize them with some minor gods and primordial entities. One piece of feedback that we received was that the names and domains of gods represented a very narrow facet of Greek mythology; in fact, what drew all our team members to this concept in the first place was the rich corpus of lore featuring interactions between gods, heroes, mortals, and monsters.

Therefore, one of our overarching goals for p4 was to incorporate more tales from Greek mythology, especially ones that continue to hold cultural significance. We wanted to make these stories accessible through gameplay, especially to a younger audience. To validate player retention of information, we modified our assessment form from P1 to include new questions that centered around mythological lore.



Which Greek hero was tasked with completing 12 Labors?

- Achilles
- Hercules
- Midas
- Sisyphus
- Tantalus

...

Who was punished with eternal hunger and thirst?

- Achilles
- Hercules
- Midas
- Sisyphus
- Tantalus

...

Who trapped the hero Odysseus on their isle, stopping him from returning home to Ithaca?

- Calypso
- Midas
- Echo
- Prometheus

Pic: Sample of added questions in assessment form

To this end, we also wanted to present a coherent aesthetic that is playful, fantastical and approachable. This visual language was carried through our packaging, board/playmat design, game tokens, card designs and rulebook design.

Finally, we wanted to improve player experience. We wanted players to be able to learn to play the game from scratch with ease and interact with mythology presented through balanced, fun and engaging game dynamics.

Gamebits

[Rulebook](#)

[Box & Packaging](#)

[Print at home version](#)

History Versions & Playtests

Version 1

For this version, our starting point was where we left off at the end of P1 with the exception of a few minor changes such as clarifications to the rulebook. For this test, we wanted to refresh our understanding of the dynamics of the game as well as test the previous version with a group of non-CS377G students.



Playtest documentation

Playtest 1 Notes

12/4/23 | 3 male, 1 female non-CS377G students

- **Wording on both the rulebook and the cards need to be clarified frequently.** There was confusion caused by inconsistent wording (“settlement” vs. “villages”) and otherwise unclear language.
- **Events were not as impactful** (too universal on their effects on people, never generated a swing) and became somewhat predictable.
- **Players held resource & action cards in their hands without revealing them.** As a result, for action cards involving stealing, players had to ask if each other if they had a certain resource
- **Few players were able to engage with Patron gods**, because the scarcity of labor cards meant it was extremely difficult to build temples
- **Few players chose to obtain action cards**, opting instead to draw resources.
- **Players felt that certain Patron gods and action cards needed to be balanced.** In total, they mentioned 12 components that needed to be balanced. These cards and components would go on to be addressed in later iterations.

Insights

While much of the observation and feedback was similar to the last P1 playtest, we gained a few new insights:

- Related to learning goals, players wanted to see goals and events tied more closely to their ethos. For example, one player stated “Ares making +1 bonus doesn’t feel like a war thing.” Another player mentioned that “famine and earthquake is a bit broad and would instead want some more hyper specific references.”
- Due to the complexity of the game, we needed to make sure that the rules were explicit and answered any questions that may pop up during play. Furthermore, players continued to be confused about what they’re allowed to do in a round, indicating that we needed to find an easier way for players to interact.
- Resources, gods, and action cards felt critically unbalanced at times. Due to time constraints, we were not able to objectively balance actions, patrons, and resources. Moving forward, we knew we needed to draw on past readings that discussed how to mathematically balance game mechanics.

Version 2

In the second iteration, we decided to implement several changes. First, we reduced the draw amount to 2 cards per round to slow the pacing. Next, we allowed players to start with 1 Patron god to guarantee they would be able to learn about a Patron god and how they interact with other gods. To improve the ease of playing a round, we implemented an individual action round and resource round. Lastly, we changed the cost of the fortification to 1 stone and 1 wood to make it less dependent on labor as a requirement.

Rounds

The game will proceed in rounds. Each round is divided into three periods: the building period, the action period and the global event period. The effect of each God takes place before the building period.

During the building period, every player goes in turns. At each turn, players can:

- 1) Resource Collection: collect 2 resource cards. You may either take from the visible 5 cards, or draw blindly from the pile. You can take cards in any combination (ex: 1 blind and 1 from visible cards, etc). Once finished, replenish the visible cards until there are once again 5 cards face-up on the table.
- 2) Build: use your available resources to build structures. You may build as many structures as your resources allow. You may also use a blessing to summon a patron god during this phase, if you have a temple.

During the action period, every player once again goes in turns. At each turn, players can:

- 3) Draw an action card
- OR
- 4) Play an action card

Pic: Change in rulebook to individual action and resource round

Playtest 2 Notes

12/5/23 | 4 male 377G students

- **Players were confused by many rules** such as deciding who gets to go first, what direction to switch cards when the “Eris” action was applied, or what “+1” means on Ares’ power description.
- **Patron gods were often engaged with.** Players would read each other’s Patron god cards to see their powers and plan their strategies around that. Zeus seemed to be too powerful however and was destructive to fellow player interactions with patrons.
- **There was much player interaction.** A moment from the playtest best displays how players used both Patron abilities and action cards to interact:
 - Player A had Hermes as a Patron god and stole resources from Player B who seemed to hold a “grudge.”
 - Player B was then amused when they got the Eris card and had the opportunity to sabotage Player A’s set.
- **Game pacing was slower.** One player who played the previous version of the game felt it was “less fun” because of the separation of “action round” and “resource round.”

Insights

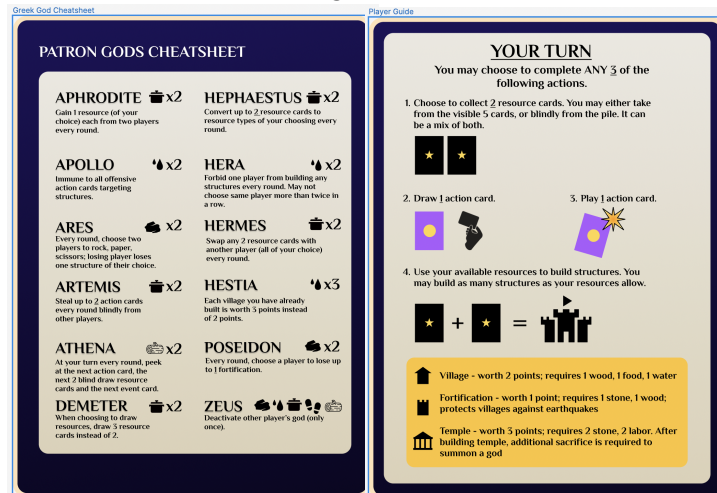
- The previous mechanics of the game worked well. Specifically, allowing players to collect, build, and play an action in the same turn allowed for smoother flow and a faster pace. Moving forward, we needed to consider how to streamline these processes.
- The game is complex with a lot of information. We needed to embed a higher level summary of key mechanics/objectives as well as a cheatsheet to improve setup and play.
- Resource costs were more balanced and allowed for players to allocate them to building a fortification or village. However, costs for Patrons gods seemed to be high and served as a barrier.

Version 3

This version took a huge leap in changes and sought to further incorporate the feedback from playtest 1 and 2. For clarity purposes, we decided to revert to the original dynamics of round actions and revise the rulebook to reflect those changes. Additionally, we provided a game mat for players to organize their resources and action cards.



Pic: game mat



Pic: cheat sheets

To experiment with improving player experience and learning, we made the following additions:

- To increase knowledge intake of minor gods and general player vs player interaction, players start with 3 action cards.
- Zeus is removed to balance the Patron gods. Players are given the choice between 3 patron gods and allowed to choose 1 at the start; this step should introduce the player to more Patrons.
- Each event should introduce a specific historical moment or artifact to the player. The first place to start in ensuring this was to remove all “do nothing” event cards.



Playtest: Start of game w/ 3 action cards to start

Playtest 3 Notes

12/6/2023 | 4 female non-377G grad students

- **The playmat was incredibly useful for players.** Multiple players stated that it was helpful with the playspace becoming organized.



Playtest: Mid-game with players using playmat for resource and structure organization

- **Players loved the lore behind the event, god, and action cards.** Players often asked to see the other Patron cards and recited the historical description for cards when playing. One player exclaimed they “loved the reading and the graphics!”
- **Players understood and learned about the significance of Patron, action, and event cards.** One player noticed that the action cards were “the minor gods, and the other ones are the big daddies[major gods].”
- **There were still many questions about specific actions and rules.** Many players wondered how to obtain a god (what an additional sacrifice means), if action cards

can be played out of turn, what “+1” means for Ares, and what happens in certain cases where players have the same number of points.

- **Some players tended to have more resources than others.** Due to Patron abilities and action cards, specific players tended to hold more resource cards than others.

Insights

This playtest was one of our most successful ones! We received many signals that players were excited and felt like they were learning. One moment from a player captures this:

- Daedalus' event card is revealed. Player A reads it out loud.
- In response, Player A yells “Bruh!!.... I’m actually learning about it – it’s very cool.”

Similar moments happened throughout the playtest. More importantly, we were able to gain further valuable insights that would shape the final in-class version:

- For some action cards such as Soteria (the ability to nullify an action) or Hypnos (the ability to skip), we needed to change the rules to allow them to be played out of turn. Additionally, the visual element of the card should be changed to reflect this ability.
- Players are excited by specific Greek mythological events. Adding additional event cards that have a strong impact could lead to greater engagement and learning.
- Relationships between cards can be a powerful learning element. One player stated that they would love to see a mechanic where the Patron gods are “more tied together; for example, gods like Zeus and Hera could have a special power if together.”
- Rules are inching towards clarity. However, there is still additional work to be done with questions that *must* be resolved in the rulebook.

Version 4

For the final in-class playtests, drastic changes were made in adding new event cards and reworking/balancing god and action cards. Balancing was done through calculating resource/point values and reworking was completed in consideration of tying the ability closer to the mythological significance. In response to confusion about action cards being played out-of-turn, we allowed for players to play Soteria and Hypnos out of turn. The rule book, card description, and card color was modified to reflect this change. Additionally, we added a resource card bank and modified the cheat sheet to improve setup time and ease of play, and also reworked much of the rulebook to improve its brevity and clarity. For polish, we added a custom-made game box, made cloth pouches for 3D printed structure tokens, and newly printed cards on heavy cardstock!



Pic: game box & pouches

New Event Cards

- Calypso's Isle, King Midas, Sisyphus, Echo, Trojan War, Hercules, Prometheus, Tantalus, Pandora's Box



Pic: Six of our new event cards

Reworked/Balanced Patron + Action cards

- Action Cards: Eris, Soteria, Hecate, Eleos, Ate, Hermes, Plutus, Hypnos
- Patron God Cards: Poseidon, Hephaestus, Athena, Hermes, Ares, Artemis, Hera, Aphrodite, Apollo, Demeter



Pic: examples of Patron Gods powers adjusted to be more in theme

Rulebook

- Modified overview to be more informative and to the point.

- Removed information unnecessary to gameplay & added FAQ.
- Turn structure was reworked - during their turn, players now choose any 3 out of 4 possible actions.

Do I have to dedicate the temple to a God immediately after building it?

No, you may choose to leave the temple empty, and sacrifice resources for the dedication a different round.

Can I swap my God?

Yes, you may. You can sacrifice the resources required for the new God and rededicate the temple to them instead.

Pic: Part of FAQ in Rulebook

Playtest Notes

12/7/2023 | 3 female, 1 male CS377G students

- **Players were able to set up and begin playing very quickly.** Players quickly identified all game components, set up board and playmats, and understood the purpose of the game - the consistent use of visual identifiers was very helpful.
 - However, players sometimes could not remember how many actions have already been completed during a turn.



Playtest: Players setup using game mat while one player reads through rules

- **Actions and rules are much clearer.** Minor clarifications were still needed for one or two specific cards, but overall players were able to refer to the language on the

card and resolve confusions. “Out of turn” action cards (i.e. Hypnos) were used and interacted with gameplay in an interesting way.



Playtest: Player drawing for resource cards while holding 4+ action cards

- **Game was very competitive.** Players frequently interacted with each other using action cards and patron god powers. One player stated that there was “beef between players, but in a good way”. Another suggested we increase emphasis on building ourselves rather than hurting others.
 - **Players had few resources overall.** Due to the high volume of steal/swap related mechanics, many players ended up being very scarce in resources.
 - **Player position was highly volatile.** There were many destructive events and actions that could bring a player’s points down quickly. Players felt it was hard to come back after being knocked down.



Playtest: Player with two temples but no resources

- **Increased interaction with mythology lore.** Almost all players had a patron god by round 3. They referenced the minor gods on action cards and frequently discussed the powers of patron gods. Players also read out loud the stories behind each event card, not just its effects.

Insights

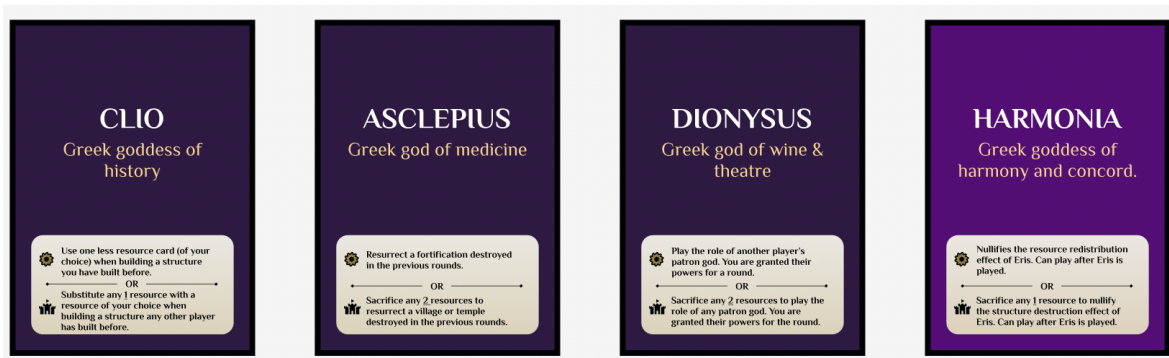
- Rulebook was nearing completion! This version was clear & informative without overwhelming players. The cheatsheets for the turn structure and patron gods were frequently referenced.
- The player mat and boards continue to be helpful. However, after modifying turn structure, it would be helpful to have a visual marker on the board to track how many actions have been completed by the player during a turn. In addition, players preferred to hold their action cards in their hand instead.
- There are too many negative player-on-player mechanics, resulting in more competitiveness, resource scarcity, and a tendency to “landslide” in points. Since we want our game to encourage & spark interest in mythology for young adults, we should reduce some of these mechanics and introduce more patron powers/actions that “build yourself up” instead of bringing other people down.

Version 5 (Final Version)

For the final version, we made relatively minor changes to address feedback from the final playtest. We clarified the wording for a few specific cards, and further refined the rulebook. We removed the action card slot on the playmat and added an action counter. We made some tweaks to a handful of action and patron god cards for balancing purposes. Finally, to reduce negative player-to-player interactions, we removed or weakened stealing mechanics from some action cards/patron gods, and added in more action cards that boosted the player themselves.

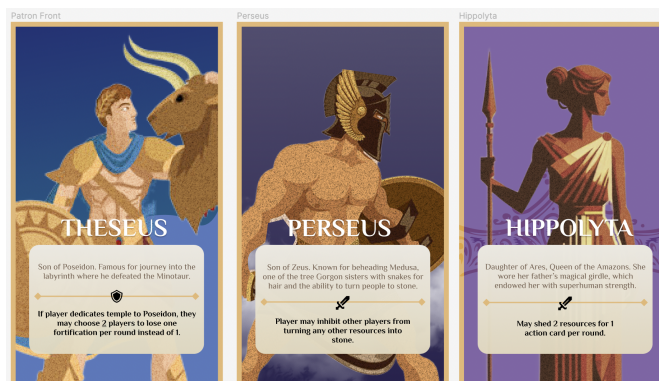


Pic: revised playmat with action counter



Pic: new boosting action cards

We briefly experimented with the idea of adding in Demigod cards, and assigning each player a demigod at random at the beginning of the game. These cards would have unique abilities, be “weaker” compared to patron gods, but the mechanics should allow for interactions that mirror relationships between heroes and gods in mythology. Because we did not have time to playtest, we ultimately left them out of the final version, but it could be an interesting evolution of the game for the future.



Pic: Sample Demigod cards

Finally, we administered our updated assessment form to select playtesters not in CS377G who played the game in its final versions. We found that compared to P1, players showed an increased ability to recall the domains of the minor gods, and despite not every player seeing the event card, they generally were able to remember the central figure of the tale. They also showed a willingness to seek out additional information after the game.

The image shows a survey form with three questions. The first question asks who was punished with eternal hunger and thirst, with 'Tantalus' selected. The second question asks who trapped Odysseus on an island, with 'Calypso' selected. The third question asks how likely the respondent is to seek out information about gods or myths, with a rating of 4 selected.

Who was punished with eternal hunger and thirst?

- Achilles
- Hercules
- Midas
- Sisyphus
- Tantalus

Who trapped the hero Odysseus on their isle, stopping him from returning home to Ithaca?

- Calypso
- Midas
- Echo
- Prometheus

How likely are you to seek out information about gods or myths mentioned in the game?

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all likely Extremely likely

Pic: response form from one playtester

Final Thoughts

In looking back at P4, we were surprised by the number of changes we made within such a short period of time. Not only did we accomplish the integration of feedback from our final P1 playtest, but we also made significant strides in extending the game to have greater polish, balance, and relevance to learning goals.

Refinement has been a very rewarding experience and one that has incorporated all of our learnings from past projects, playtesters, peers, and the teaching team. We're especially thankful to these people who have played a part in shaping Olympic Resistance!

Lastly, it's been bittersweet to return to P1 – albeit without one of our group members (we miss you Max) – and to end where we first started. The idea of Olympic Resistance initially originated from a shared love for literature and mythology, and it's been a joy to create a game that shares and teaches that to the world.